

Answers to Questions for IFB Number CFSA-07-I-0002

for

Maryland and Virginia Home Licensing Services

General Questions:

1. Is the contract period one year base period and three option years or one year base period and four option years? See Sections B-1.2 and F-1. ***The contract period is for a one year base period and four option years.***
2. How many copies of the proposal should be submitted? Section 9 of the Solicitation states that an original and 5 copies must be submitted. Section L-2.1 states that an original and two copies must be submitted. ***Bidders shall submit a signed original and two copies.***
3. May vendors proposing to provide services in Virginia limit their acceptance of referrals to the Northern Virginia geographic region? ***There is nothing that prevents a vendor from constructing its bid response related to the cost to provide services in VA by geographic regions, however; successful bidders must have quick ability to provide the contracted services wherever a family is located geographically in VA.***
4. How many children in the custody of CFSA are currently placed in Virginia, and in how many different homes do these children reside? What is the geographic distribution of these homes by county? ***According to FACES data, there are approximately 25-30 children and 18-25 homes in VA.***
5. Is a detailed budget required to be submitted with the offer, or simply the pricing schedules contained in Section B-3? Should the pricing schedules and/or any required budget detail be submitted in a separate sealed envelope or should it be submitted with the offer? ***Bidders shall submit a completed copy of the pricing schedule, outlining the pricing for services in either or both jurisdictions.***

Dual Licensure Questions:

1. Will all referrals be for dual licensure as foster and adoptive homes? ***A small percentage of referrals may not require the 15 hours due to the youth's status at time of referral. Therefore, we cannot say ALL. Although this seems implicit throughout the Solicitation, Section 5-4.2 states that 15 hours of training is not required for homes that are limited to adoption-only, implying that not all referrals will be for dual licensure.***
2. Assuming that all referrals are for dual licensure as foster and adoptive homes, are monthly monitoring visits required for all homes or just homes in which a child has been placed? If monthly visits are only required for homes in which a child has been placed, will CFSA inform the vendor when a child is placed in a home licensed by the vendor? When and how will CFSA provide this information to the vendor? ***Monthly monitoring visits are required for all homes where a child is placed based upon the child's legal status. CFSA will inform the vendor when a child has been placed within 48 hours of the child being placed. The vendor will be notified by telephone or email notification.***

3. If all referrals are not for dual licensure as foster and adoptive homes, will the vendor receive referrals for licensure of foster-only homes and/or kinship-only homes? ***The vendor will not receive referrals for foster-only homes for Maryland providers. CFSA cannot recruit providers strictly for traditional foster care in the State of Maryland. Vendors may receive referrals for kinship-foster homes for Maryland providers.***
4. Do the staffing levels set forth in Section C-11 (specifically 9.2 of the section) refer to numbers of actual workers or to numbers of full-time-equivalent workers? ***It refers to actual workers (e.g., A supervisor could supervise two (2) full time social workers, or four (4) part time workers, but under no condition may a supervisor have more than five (5) employees to supervise). Similarly, no part time worker can be permitted to have more than fifteen (15) active cases or thirty (30) active cases for a full time worker.***

Denial of Licensure Questions:

1. Sections C-4.8, 5.5 and 8.1 of the solicitation require the vendor to obtain permission of CFSA prior to denying licensure. This requirement usurps the vendor's professional licensing responsibilities and seems unethical. Will CFSA define the circumstances under which it would deny a vendor's request to deny licensure to a home? ***The intent of this language is that a contractor will provide CFSA sufficient notice of its intended decision recommendations so that CFSA has opportunity to negotiate around licensure barriers in an organized fashion that informs all critical parties. Work that a contractor initiates or completes under this contract will be subject to review and monitoring by CFSA. CFSA may take issue with a planned denial/approval/closure recommendation if there is credible and verifiable justification that a contractor's decision is inconsistent with regulatory requirements or CFSA practice.***

Meetings, Court Appearances and Reports Questions:

1. Will the child's worker from CFSA attend all hearings at which the vendor is required to appear? ***It is the normal practice of CFSA to have a worker and/or supervisor to attend hearings for youth. However, a judge may direct who must be in attendance.***
2. What steps is CFSA taking to ensure that the Court is aware that the vendor is responsible for monitoring the licensure status of the home, but not for determining the appropriateness of the placement of a particular child in the home? ***It is our position that CFSA and a contractor share decisions around placement appropriateness. Home studies generally address the family's ability to provide levels of care to youth including, but not limited to age, sex, mental/somatic health, etc. This seems appropriate especially considering that conditions often change and have impact on the recommendation for licensure.***
3. Will CFSA assume responsibility for ensuring that the vendor is made aware of all required court appearances and court reports? How much notice will CFSA provide to the vendor of required court appearances and court reports? ***Yes, CFSA OLM will ensure that the vendor is informed within one (1) business day of its receipt of notice requiring a vendor to attend a hearing or submit a report.***

4. Will vendor representatives be required to appear in person at staffing conferences or via telephone? How much notice will be provided for such meetings? ***Vendor representatives are required to participate in staffing conferences. The representative is able to participate in person or by telephone and will receive notice within fourteen (14) days before a staffing.***

Referrals:

1. How does a vendor obtain permission from CFSA to reject a referral? ***Upon initial referral (see C.2.3) a vendor must indicate its acceptance or rejection in the section of the Referral Assignment Notice and return it to CFSA OLM with justification as appropriate. The OLM supervisor will review all justification for referral rejection and provide a written response.***
2. If a vendor seeks permission from CFSA to reject a referral, it seems unrealistic to expect the vendor to be able to accept or reject the referral within two business days. Can this timeframe be extended? ***The contractor's return of the acceptance/rejection notice as indicated in the contract alerts CFSA of a referral rejection decision. CFSA may concur or deny a rejection if a rejection is inconsistent with regulatory mandates or a vendor fails to provide reasonable support that justifies its decision.***
3. By requiring monthly reports to be submitted by the 7th calendar day of the succeeding month, it is likely that the monthly report and invoices submitted for the month will not always agree. Can the deadline for submission of the monthly report be extended to the 15th of the month in order to assure consistency with invoicing? ***CFSA OLM holds the position that seven (7) calendar days is sufficient time to ensure that all work completed during a previous month is recorded in the monthly report. This may also permit additional opportunity for a vendor's program staff to submit the monthly report to vendor accounting personnel for review to increase the likelihood of invoice accuracy. An invoice should reflect only those services completed in the previous month.***

Contract Transition and Termination Questions:

1. Will homes already referred to a vendor that are in the process of licensure be transitioned to the vendor's new contract, if awarded? ***Yes, unless there is a case specific rationale for why this would not be in the best interest of a family.***
2. If a vendor has currently dually-licensed homes that it is monitoring, will these homes be transitioned to the vendor's new contract, if awarded? ***Yes, unless there is a case specific rationale for why this would not be in the best interest of a family.***
3. What entity will be responsible for monthly monitoring, court reports and court appearances for homes that are licensed when the proposed contract is terminated? If the vendor remains responsible for continued monitoring, court reports and appearances after termination of the contract, for how long will these responsibilities continue? ***If a contract is not awarded to a vendor that is currently responsible for monthly monitoring, court reports and court appearances, there will be a ninety day (90) transition period.***

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